

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3017

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TAGS: APER, MX, CGEN

SUBJ: TEMPORARY STAFFING FOR CONSULAR PEAK SEASON

REF: STATE 019859, STATE 280864

1. WE UNDERSTAND FROM CONSULTATIONS WITH WINGATE LLOYD THAT ISSUE OF CONSULAR COMMISSIONS FOR DEPENDENTS CANNOT BE RESOLVED IN TIME TO MEET OUR NEEDS FOR UPCOMING RUSH SEASON. EASTER RUSH SEASON HERE BEGINS MID-MARCH, AND WE ARE REQUESTING BY SEPTEL PIT POSITIONS FOR THE EMBASSY AND CONSULAR POSTS DURING PERIOD MARCH 15 TO SEPTEMBER 15.

2. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE STRONGLY THAT TRAINING AND COMMISSIONING QUALIFIED DEPENDENTS AS CONSULAR OFFICERS OFFERS THE MOST PROMISING SOLUTION TO THE WORLD-WIDE PROBLEM OF OFFICER STAFFING TO MEET PEAK SEASON CONSULAR WORKLOADS. THE PROPOSAL ALSO MIGHT ALLEVIATE MORALE PROBLEM OF HIGHLY-QUALIFIED FOREIGN SERVICE SPOUSES WHO ARE UNABLE TO OBTAIN PROFESSIONAL-LEVEL EMPLOYMENT AT POST. FURTHERMORE, WITH CAREFUL SELECTION, PROPER TRAINING AND EXAMINATION, WE FORESEE NO HARMFUL DILUTION OF THE CONSULAR CAREER PRINCIPLE IN THE COMMISSIONING OF THESE AUXILIARY CONSULAR OFFICERS FOR LIMITED SERVICE. THEREFORE, WE URGE THAT THE DEPARTMENT CONTINUE TO WORK OUT THE OBSTACLES THAT LIE IN THE WAY OF COMMISSIONING DEPENDENTS AS AUXILIARY OFFICERS. HOWEVER, WE NOW RECOGNIZE THAT NO SUCH PROGRAM CAN BE DEVELOPED IN TIME TO MEET OUR MARCH 15 DEADLINE. IT APPEARS EQUALLY UNLIKELY THAT THE DEPARTMENT WOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE SUFFICIENT CONSULAR OFFICERS ON TDY TO MEET OUR PEAK-SEASON NEEDS. WE THEREFORE PROPOSE

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AND EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM WHICH WOULD PROVIDE AN ACCEPTABLE

TEMPORARY SOLUTION TO OUR MANPOWER NEEDS AND ALSO PROVIDE PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE ON WHICH TO BASE A FUTURE PROGRAM FOR AUXILIARY CONSULAR OFFICERS.

3. WE PROPOSE TO SELECT FROM AVAILABLE CANDIDATES THOSE WHO APPEAR BEST QUALIFIED FOR OFFICER-LEVEL RESPONSIBILITIES AND HIRE THEM IN PIT POSITIONS AT SENIOR SUPPORT STAFF LEVEL. WE WOULD TRAIN THESE QUASI-OFFICERS ON THE JOB, AND UTILIZE THEM DURING THE SPRING-SUMMER RUSH SEASON IN THOSE TYPES OF CONSULAR WORK WHICH DO NOT ACTUALLY REQUIRE A CONSULAR COMMISSION. FOR EXAMPLE, NIV PRELIMINARY INTERVIEWING, DRAFTING OF CORRESPONDENCE, ASPECTS OF WELFARE/ WHEREABOUTS WORK, AND MUCH ARREST-AND-DETENTION WORK CAN BE DONE BY INTELLIGENT PIT'S UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF COMMISSIONED OFFICERS.

4. UNDER SUCH AN EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM, WE COULD DEVELOP, BY THE END OF THE RUSH SEASON, A SMALL CORE OF POTENTIAL CANDIDATES FOR COMMISSIONING WHOSE SUITABILITY FOR AND COMPETENCE IN CONSULAR WORK HAVE BEEN TESTED MORE REALISTICALLY THAN IS POSSIBLE IN THE BEX PROCESS. WE CAN ALSO GAIN EXPERIENCE IN THE SELECTING, TRAINING AND UTILIZATION OF AUXILIARY OFFICERS THAT WOULD BE USEFUL TO THE DEPARTMENT AND OTHER FOREIGN SERVICE POSTS IN DEVELOPING A FORMAL PROGRAM. AND, OF MORE IMMEDIATE IMPORTANCE TO THIS POST, WE WILL HAVE A SOLUTION TO OUR OFFICER MANPOWER NEEDS WHICH, WHILE NOT IDEAL, WE BELIEVE WOULD BE CLEARLY PREFERABLE TO FACING ANOTHER RUSH SEASON WITH INADEQUATE STAFF.

5.FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM, WE PROPOSE TO DEFER FSI'S OFFER OF FORMAL/TRAINING AT POST. SIMILARLY, BEX PARTICIPATION IN SELECTING CANDIDATES SHOULD BE POSTPONED UNTIL OTHER OBSTACLES TO FORMAL COMMISSIONING HAVE BEEN WORKED OUT.
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